

a very long time. As they are seizing those reins, we are asked to stand in the Senate and to lay out in writing for all those who want to destabilize this new government the timetable on which we will remove our Armed Forces.

Of course, there is a collateral question that is not addressed in this amendment. Maybe my colleague will address it. The United States, albeit, is the principal force of military. Great Britain, commensurate with the size of their armed forces and their nation and their population, has made a very significant contribution, as has Poland, and I could enumerate the other nations; modest though they may be, they are there. How are they to respond to this amendment? Are they to go on and pursue the missions they have laid out or are they to devise a timetable? That is one of the many unanswered questions I find in this amendment. Perhaps my colleagues will be forthcoming.

The major events certainly of the last 10 days—the elimination of al-Zarqawi, a terrorist without parallel in the contemporary times of all mankind, his elimination, the formation of this new government—has given a momentum forward. It has spawned a measure of hope among the Iraqi people. It has spawned a measure of hope within our Armed Forces that there is clear proof our many sacrifices to date are beginning to produce concrete, visible results that cannot be challenged.

We are moving toward establishing a secure and prosperous nation that will be an inspiration for the entire region of that world, and it is hard to think at this time we would take any action in this Senate to set back that momentum. The only way we are going to see our troops come home is if they seize that sovereignty, exercise that sovereignty, produce their own security and begin to reestablish their infrastructure.

I do not see this amendment in any way helping. I see this amendment as impeding the progress.

Give this new government a timetable. I ask my colleague, give them a timetable if you have to give a timetable to establish their goals, seize the reins of sovereignty. Do not broadcast through this amendment a timetable with regard to our forces.

We all know there have been some very difficult days, tragic hours, the most recent of which is the loss of our two brave soldiers seized, and although not fully confirmed, certainly the probability is they were badly abused, not treated as prisoners of war but badly abused by someone in Iraq. Who knows who they may have been? Obviously, the insurgents, presumably al-Qaida.

Our President, Secretaries of State and Defense, and our military commanders have all stood and said forthrightly, these are painful losses. Each one of these individuals I know and have worked with personally. They feel the loss of life. They feel for the in-

jured. They feel for their families. But to attain the freedom, not just for the Iraqis but for this country, from terrorism, that pain has to be endured, those losses are likely to continue. I commend all for being forthright that the days ahead pose challenges and further losses.

Any amendment requiring phased redeployment as our policy on a timetable to begin in 2006 sends that signal that begins to set back the progress we have achieved to date. That phrase about the timetable of redeployment will be examined with utmost care by those who are trying to destabilize this government—be they al-Qaida, insurgents, or, unfortunately, the sectarian violence. They are likely to say, we will wait out the timetable and then we will resume the violence and with every means we can to destabilize this government. That will be the result of this amendment.

This is an inopportune time because in the last 10 days we witnessed the death of the most prominent terrorist in Iraq, the complete formation of the Iraqi Government, a historic meeting in Baghdad between President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki, more raids against al-Qaida cells in Iraq, and a plan for the way ahead for this new democratically elected government in Iraq. We have the momentum. We must take advantage of this moment and this opportunity and move forward.

I know other colleagues are anxious to speak. I want to share this time.

I pose a question to my distinguished colleague from Michigan about another paragraph in his amendment. This one I find particularly puzzling. It is written, again, in very clear language, so I feel the meaning of it is written explicitly on page 5.

It says that the President of the United States should do the following:

(i) expedite the transition of United States forces in Iraq to a limited presence . . .

What do you mean by “limited presence”?

. . . limited presence and mission of training Iraqi security forces . . .

That we are doing with every bit of vigor we can possibly muster.

. . . providing logistic support of Iraqi security forces . . .

We are doing that as best we can.

. . . protecting United States infrastructure and personnel, and participating in targeted counterterrorism activities;

Does that mean we limit our force structure to the special ops forces? What is it that the balance of our forces do? Do they begin to rotate back under this timetable?

I hope at some point in this debate those questions can be fully answered because the President is the Commander in Chief. He makes the decisions with regard to how our Armed Forces are employed utilizing the advice of the professional military commanders to direct specifically the actions to carry out the missions to achieve our goals.

I say to my good friend, this paragraph D, the President should expedite the transition, what is the nature of the transition of United States forces in Iraq to a limited presence?

I see no contingency phrase in this as there is elsewhere in this amendment. If they were to have a tremendous insurrection, what do we do if we have transitioned our forces? Does that mean they are moved somewhere? Does that mean they stay in their bases?

This paragraph, in effect, is usurping the rights under the Constitution of the Commander in Chief to direct the day-by-day operations and deployment and disposition of our Armed Forces. I hope in the course of this debate they will find time to explain with greater clarity what is meant by that paragraph.

After consultation, No. 2, “with the Government of Iraq, begin the phased redeployment of United States forces from Iraq this year,” to me, again, lays down a marker that something is in the hip pocket regarding a timetable.

Yes, we start with the government, and the Senator from Michigan cited some of the current government officials and some of the statements they have made. I freely say some of those statements do raise questions in my mind, but this government has only been in business a bare month. We have to give them time. We have to give the new Congress of the Iraqi Government an opportunity to voice its views in conjunction with those of the government officials.

This word “after consultation . . . begin the phased redeployment,” how about if the government said we did not want a phased redeployment at this time? What would be the purpose of the consultation if they said, We do not want it at this time?

That statement, in effect, has been stated time and time again while there have been remarks that, yes, we hope you will lure your forces away, the bottom line is, they know they cannot survive with this new government if we begin any major withdrawal of forces in the coming 2 or 3 months while this government is taking root.

That is clear. No one disputes that.

But you say “consultation,” then “begin the phased redeployment . . . from Iraq.” That is not my idea of consultation. My idea of consultation is to take into consideration the viewpoints of both sides.

So we come back to submit to Congress a plan by the end of the year 2006 with estimated dates for the continued phased redeployment of United States forces from Iraq with the understanding that unexpected contingencies may arise.

That is fortunate to have that in there, but that is sort of lost because of the prominence of the first sentence. That is what is going to be read and interpreted by the insurgents, all those who want to bring down this new government. That signal must not be sent by the Congress.